



HALLMARKS

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# *divine dirt*

*Literature and Art*

from the Upper School student body of Harpeth Hall



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## Existential

### Ligature

Rebecca Blair

When I broke my ankle  
at the age of half the apostles,  
I thought of the bones  
crumbling like the walls of Jericho  
And bleeding like the Red Sea.  
When I ascended the stairs  
I envisioned the parts like a machine  
with churning patella gears,  
steel beams tibia and fibula,  
and a muscular conveyor belt  
entangled with knotty nerve wires:  
each cell perfectly chiseled  
like God's own Bernini—  
his artistry detailed  
in each anatomical manual.  
My kindergarten companions squirmed  
at my favorite picture book:  
Sickening. Gross. Disgusting.  
And my marvel was sin.



scratchboard by Caroline Harwood

### Lifestyle

Kayleigh Land

The way I evaluate hair is different.  
I prefer the naturalistic dread.  
These knots are a sign of life,  
A sign of time not wasted.  
Filth is just extra time living.  
Dirt means extra minutes of being  
Showered by experience.  
Water has no credibility  
When it is put beside filth.  
Cleanliness is waste.  
Time is true.

### A Universal Purpose

Keely Hendricks

You can never feel more alive  
Than when you realize your heartbeat isn't futile—  
That there's a sort of gravity pulling the pulse to your chest,  
A sense of purpose that pumps the blood—  
That we are not just a delicate configuration of carbon and such,  
But we are science and destiny and a certain spirituality.  
Skin may hold us intact, but there is something else—  
It swells inside us and, like a bloated magnetic field, it keeps the togetherness.  
It is proof that we are living and that life is more complicated—  
More fragile, more precious—  
Than we ever thought, and there is a purpose  
Sunk inside all of us, buried in the folds of our organs and vessels and thoughts  
That pushes us to be more than a complex system,  
To live up to our pasts, our ancestors, the stars that lent us their atoms  
So that we can feel important and big, even in a Universe!  
where we are small



## *Death*

**Annie Weaver**

Death ... Tiptoes around the living—cloak in hand—  
Snatching up souls without so much as a word  
And vanishes in the night.

Death ... Can show up in a fury, burning crimson  
And other times gently tapping on the shoulder,  
Whispering, It's time to go. It's time to go.

Death ... Can pop up around the corner  
Or be visible in the rearview mirror for 50 miles,  
Beckoning with a bony finger.

Death ... Usually crashes the party.  
But sometimes Death gets an invitation—handwritten, it seems—  
Maybe he goes, maybe he doesn't.

Death ... Is not always a monster.  
He kisses the old goodbye and the young goodnight  
And carries them from one world to the next.

---

charcoal drawing (opposite page)  
by Hayley Gammons







## *The Origin of Species*

**Caroline Harwood**

The thing about nature is this:  
It makes you homesick—  
Homesick for a place that you've never been, or one that never existed.  
Every man has his theory, but mine . . . mine is that some of us  
Grew like seeds in the dirt, splitting a soft membranous shell  
To emerge naked from the damp earth  
Like a tender shoot—soft and sinewy  
And feel the sun on our backs  
The wind in our hair  
And we inhaled, deep and slow, taking tiny spores into our bodies  
To grow inside of our lungs.  
We didn't fear death,  
Because we knew that death is only the earth  
Taking back what belongs to her.  
And even now, in a world of shopping malls and microwave meals,  
Of mint-flavored dental floss and instant gratification,  
I want to bury myself beneath the moss and smooth stones  
And collect raindrops in the pores of my skin,  
And never again feel like a fragment  
Of a puzzle I never fit in.

## *Through the Cyprus Trees*

**Sarah Hong**

Through the crown of Cyprus trees  
Wood nebulously intertwined,  
A moving sea of souls in branchy shores

They stand together, but keep apart  
For a Cyprus tree does not grow  
In the shadow of another

Yet they quiver and dance  
To the same reedy music of the wind,  
They are the same

So they are divided together,  
And stand alone  
Through the crown of Cyprus trees

## *Loons*

*(I hear the loons on the lake at five in the morning)*

**Bailey McCarthy**

I go,  
I leave,  
I take my human disruptions and reactions,

I let the earth go back to peace.

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linoleum block print (opposite page) by Sadie Petraitis



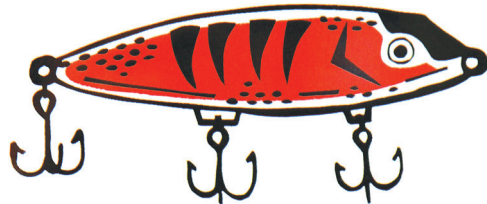
## *The Night Feeding*

**Kristen Barrett**

The quaffing behemoth gulps and gulps  
on the unsuspecting white wisps in the blue expanse,  
smothering the ball of fire  
With its concentrated darkness.

Malevolently satisfied, the bulging monster burps up  
masses of heavenly light  
to light our way in the night  
like patient keepers of the sky

The corpulent being smiles  
keenly over our routine existence  
Its face imprinted on the suspending spheroid of gray.



silkscreen by Rowan Griscom

## *The Dark*

**Dasha Didier**

I am tired of doing nothing  
This nothing that drags on, an anchor in the sand

## *The Dharma Bums*

**Bonnie Scott**

He was sitting on a hill in a dirty black sleeping bag when I first saw him. He wore many layers of thick sweaters so as to shield himself from the cold and had a hood over his head to further keep out the wind. He had a thick, reddish brown beard and prominent cheek bones. Kind green eyes peeked out towards me, taking in the wonders and terrors of the world. He was a dharma bum, and his name was Johnny.

After traveling to San Francisco, I can say that I have officially met what Jack Kerouac first described to me as a dharma bum. *Dharma* is the Sanskrit word meaning the order of the universe, or “that which maintains the stability and harmony of the universe.” *Bum* refers to one who lives by begging, and the word itself carries many negative connotations such as laziness or worthlessness. The phrase itself means, to Jack Kerouac at least, a roaming, train hopping, homeless adventurer seeking out the ultimate truths of the world. *The Dharma Bums* is a novel written by Jack Kerouac in 1958 which outlines the life and travels of Ray Smith, a twenty-something year old seeking a Buddhist life and ultimately, enlightenment. Ray is detached from most of the comforts of the typical American lifestyle. He has no home, no clothes but the ones he wears on his back, no money, no security but that which he can offer himself, and no communication with anyone but those he meets on his journey. Though Ray has other friends like him such as Japhy, a wild and wise Buddhist who offers Ray much comfort and guidance, he is utterly alone for most of his journey, and it is in this aloneness that his understanding of himself and the world comes to fruition.

Ray’s journey is far from glamorous. He is an outsider to the structured world, a threat to the comfortable norm. When I first began to read *The Dharma Bums*, I had a hard time relating to Ray. Though I tried to imagine myself in his position, it was a strain. Sure, I’ve known people who have backpacked Europe alone or gone on what most people would consider a “wild” adventure and headed off to a foreign place where no one knew their name. But that isn’t the same thing that Ray was doing. He was subjecting himself to true and honest poverty. He was going against the grain of society in order to find true fulfillment for himself. Try to imagine yourself begging for food. Try to picture your clothes dirty, your hair knotted, your body cold, standing on the side of the highway with a backpack and a thumb pointed towards the sky, with no plan. So often, we are told to seek out adventure. We often revere those who sky dive or climb a mountain or travel,



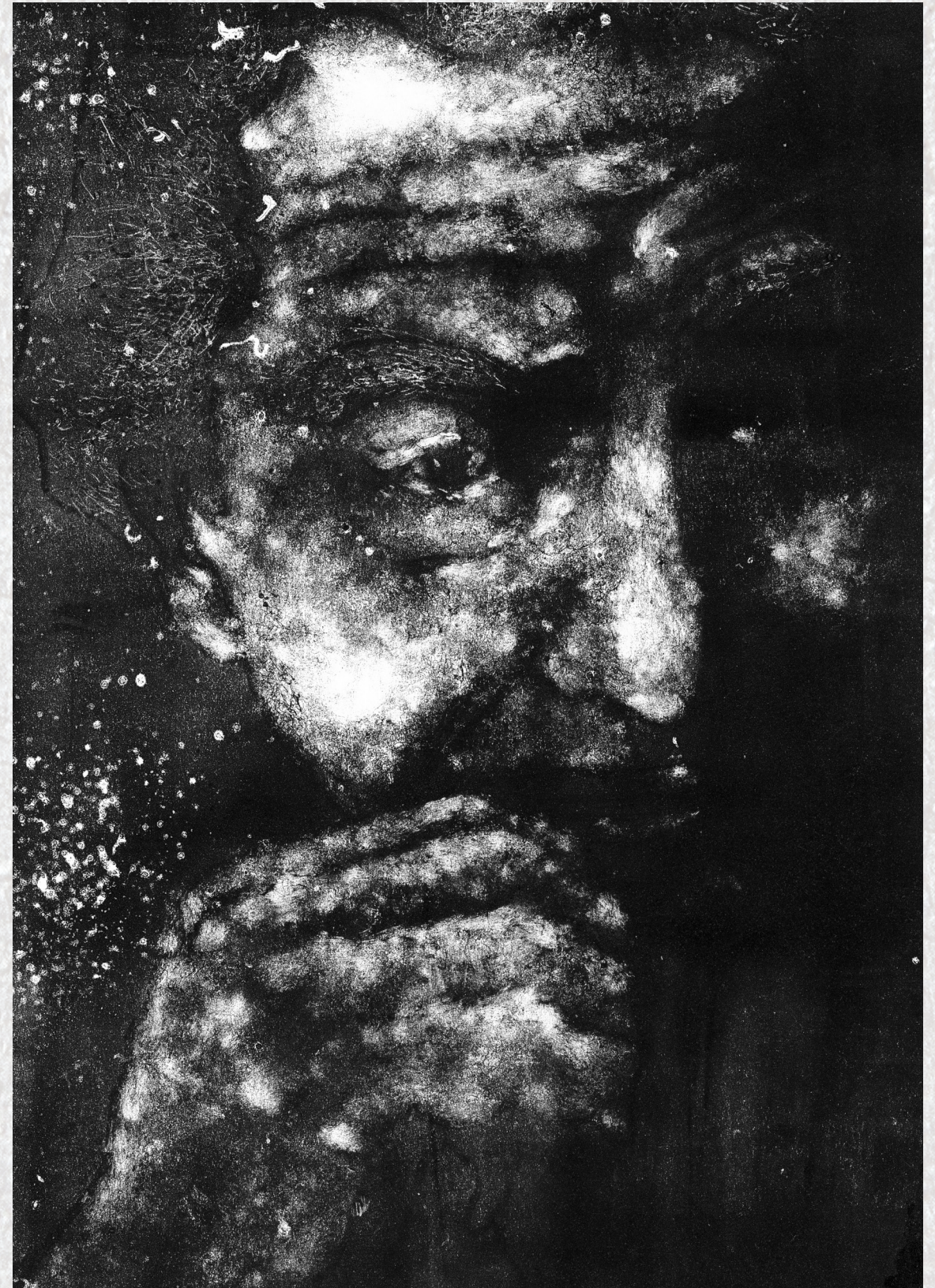
but what I’ve realized is that these “dangerous” adventures are still within the confines of our comfort and our experience.

Through Ray’s story, I realized that I have never exposed myself to true adversity. I’ve allotted myself mild discomforts, but I have no idea what real struggle is. It wasn’t, however, until the end of *The Dharma Bums* that I understood an even more vital point—that I don’t have to look any further than my own psyche to confront true struggle. Ray takes a job as a mountain ranger atop Desolate Peak for a summer; he spends his time alone, meditating, and attempting to grapple with the strangeness of the material universe. Many times, he is overcome with pain, with loneliness, and with fear—a deep, unsettling fear in the knowledge of his own vulnerability and approaching death. In my own attempts at true independence, I have often discovered the same painful feelings. True aloneness is not easy. In fact, I think it may be one of the hardest feelings one can face. One of my favorite German poets, Rainer Maria Rilke, in his letters of advice to a young artist once wrote, “Love your solitude and try to sing out with the pain it causes you. For those who are near you are far away and this shows that the space around you is beginning to grow vast. And if what is near you is far away, then your vastness is already among the stars and is very great; be happy about your growth, in which of course you can’t take anyone with you, and be kind to those who stay behind...Your solitude will be a support and a home for you, even in the midst of very unfamiliar circumstances, and from it you will find all your paths.”

*The Dharma Bums* planted in my mind a seed of truth which Rainer Maria Rilke was able to further nurture. This truth is that in order to give to the world, to nurture and understand it, you must first go within yourself. Only in this inward contemplation can one venture beyond the confines of his or her own prejudices and narrowness.

The man that I met in San Francisco was seeking fulfillment by distancing himself from the structures which inhibited him. By divesting himself of society’s standards, he found himself moving further inwards towards his own.

In my own life, I hope above all else to give all that I have to offer to the world, to exude the light which was given to me, and to create my own. I will try not to be afraid if I am misunderstood or if my life does not fit neatly into a comfortable box. There is originality and beauty in everything. Even the pain and anxiety within us always has the potential to make us feel more alive, to remind us that we are breathing and to break us until we have to learn how to heal. Do not be afraid of experience or adversity. Live boldly and let go of all that which takes away from your true self, which only you can know. In letting go, I think you’ll find that all that you’ve ever needed, all that you’ve ever desired, is already somewhere inside.



monotype print by Sara Swords



section 2

## Up and Down

## Hasten Carefree

**Brennan Frazier**

I love to run.  
The rhythmic beat  
Of my feet  
Pounding the pavement.  
Carrying the sun  
On piggyback for miles.  
Washed over with relief  
After a large hill is climbed.



photographic collage (Hockney) by Megan Derwenskus





oil on canvas by Emily Martin

## *Chameleon*

**Reagan Alley**

I feel, now and then, like a fly on a mural,  
 A small charcoal smudge  
 In a cobwebby corner of the Mona Lisa.  
 She's beautiful, colorful, swathed in the rainbow.  
 She radiates purpose—smug little grin  
 Or is it a frown?  
 Laughing or crying, I'd take either one  
 Just for a day to know my own pallet.  
 It's only five colors—how hard can it be?  
 But you have it mastered:  
 Red  
 In your cheeks and your laugh as we dance  
 Orange  
 Like fireworks, sunrise in every word  
 Yellow  
 Heat, sweat and long days without you  
 Green  
 That old jacket you wear winter long  
 Blue  
 Lassoed sky, pooled in your irises  
 Indigo  
 Summer night sweet on your lips  
 Violet  
 Measured breaths, drumroll that buries me.  
 Five simple colors you see every day,  
 And yet somehow each time they sweep me away.  
 Before us  
 Behind us  
 Paint my eyes open, rip me  
 Hammer them closed, blind me  
 Swirl happiness, its blues and hues and ancient melodies, into the creases of my reaching fingers  
 Steal my lungs  
 Make me breathe  
 Make me live





## *Color My Heart*

**Eliza Trost**

Slightly synesthetic  
(note: only a little. I don't taste music)(although I wish I could).

And  
That synesthesia gives me so much  
Like  
Colors.

Not only for letters and words,  
But for people.

(Wow)

The better I know someone, the brighter and more distinct their color is.

colored pencil composition by Bailey Fields

Some  
Of my  
BEST  
Friends have two colors  
And I didn't make that up.  
It has to count  
Count for something.  
'Cause I don't pick people's colors  
They just Are  
The color  
And  
What I find most exciting  
Is that the colors never waver.  
Once I am friends  
Once they have a color  
Their color stays with them always.





## *Circus*

**Marliese Dalton**

Ladies and Gentlemen  
The ringmaster exclaims,  
as around me the tinkling bells of “Entrance of the Gladiators”  
grabs hold of my ears.  
Now on with the show!  
Performers begin to emerge from the curtained off door,  
unicyclists dance forth with such dizzying speed  
that all you can discern is a barely visible head  
attached to a mass of flying color.  
In the first ring you’ll see—  
Tigers rip through the door  
taking their true place as kings of the show.  
—a feat beyond your wildest dreams.  
Time stands still as above me the shimmering trapeze artists  
perform flip after flip, twisting their bodies in such shapes  
that they could not possibly be human.  
My adrenalin is pumping—my eyes are moving faster and faster.  
The clowns laugh as they emerge  
soaking the audience with that familiar seltzer spray.  
Suddenly a whip is cracked and the picture changes.  
A man shrieks as the lion attacks.  
The trapeze artist falls just shy of the bar.  
And the unicyclists that had become blurs around the rings,  
come sharply into focus as they crash into the crowds.  
My mind starts to spin  
my eyes widen at the spectacle.  
All around me the people are screaming,  
the clowns no longer funny with their cold seltzer spray  
become the focus of every child’s phobia.  
And as I watch my world descend into madness  
I hear the ringmaster’s voice lifting above it all  
Ladies and Gentlemen, Children of all ages!  
I present to you  
The Cirque de Lucan!





## *Come to the Black*

Shelby Nutter

Not a lamp, not a light, not even a candle  
pierces the depth of this darkness.  
The dirt underfoot, if any foot did walk here,  
crumbles like the little house in this wood.  
The sunlight that used to cross the grass that once grew  
has not visited in a while.  
The shudders of the house barely hanging by hinges,  
the glass windows shattered,  
beckon inward to the darkness that is the house.  
The torn and ragged curtains stream slightly inward  
from the light breeze, welcoming the darkness from outside  
to greet its twin dwelling inside.  
The old pickup truck that once upon a time  
obstructed the twisting driveway  
has not visited for a while.  
The trees outside cast no shadow,  
for there is no darkness blacker  
than already engulfs this place.  
We would greet you if you ventured to us;  
we would greet a stranger, an old friend.  
Come to the black, come to the black.

digital self-portrait by Sarah Pagnani  
makeup by Caroline Harwood





## *Red*

**Gracie King**

Red is a covetous color  
charming like an honest smile

but  
vulgar as a spit-filled kiss

or blood on darkened water

only to change to  
elegant like a lady's dress

or  
three  
drops  
of blood  
on  
paper



gesso and acrylic on paper by Katie Hong

However

The one thing Mars' color

never neglects to hide

in its myriad shades

is passion like a

lover's letter

or a well used blade



## *Adam's Fall*

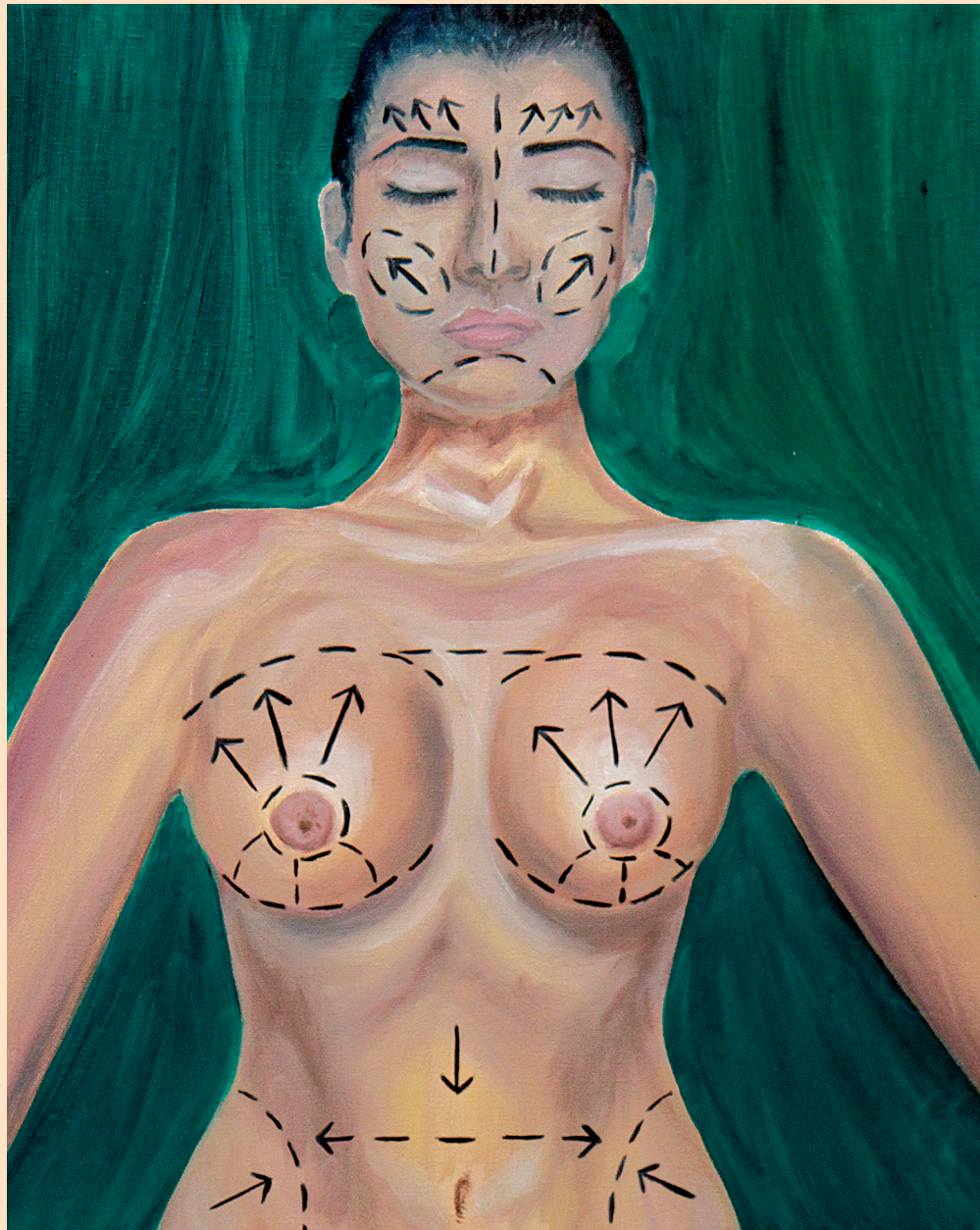
**Julia Pair**

God gave him Eve  
They lived as one  
Until, with an apple, all was undone

pen, ink, and gold leaf on Bristol board by Jamie DuBois



## The self



oil on canvas by Delara Alviri

## Ugly Truth

**Julia Warner**

When I was young,  
I found myself  
In the branches of a thirty-foot magnolia tree.  
All the beauty I needed  
was up in those lush, lofty arms.  
But things changed when I grew tall enough to be seen.  
I met the mirror's cold, sharp teeth  
When I shook hands with magazines.  
The makeup promised everything  
But showed me what I'll never be.  
And the songs and shows and everything else  
Taught me to regret myself.  
It wasn't until later that I understood what Mother said  
About the ugly truth of beauty.  
And anyways, it was too late then to make a difference.

## Romance (After Rimbaud)

**Amy Jo Weaver**

*On n'est pas sérieux  
Quand on a dix-sept ans*

No one's serious at seventeen  
On memorable nights when vodka and Gatorade  
And loud rambling voices invade your memory—  
You stumbled city streets unafraid.



## *A Temporary Departure*

**Morgan Dentz**

On stage,  
The radiance warms me  
And turns my worries  
Into butterflies  
That take light on my heart.  
I am not coy and clumsy:  
Instead, I become  
A guide brought back from death,  
A factory worker out of breath,  
The statue of our liberty,  
A child at a spelling bee.  
And I revel in the escape.  
But then the lights turn off,  
And the floor is painted black  
Over old memories,  
So I must say goodbye—for now—to another friend.

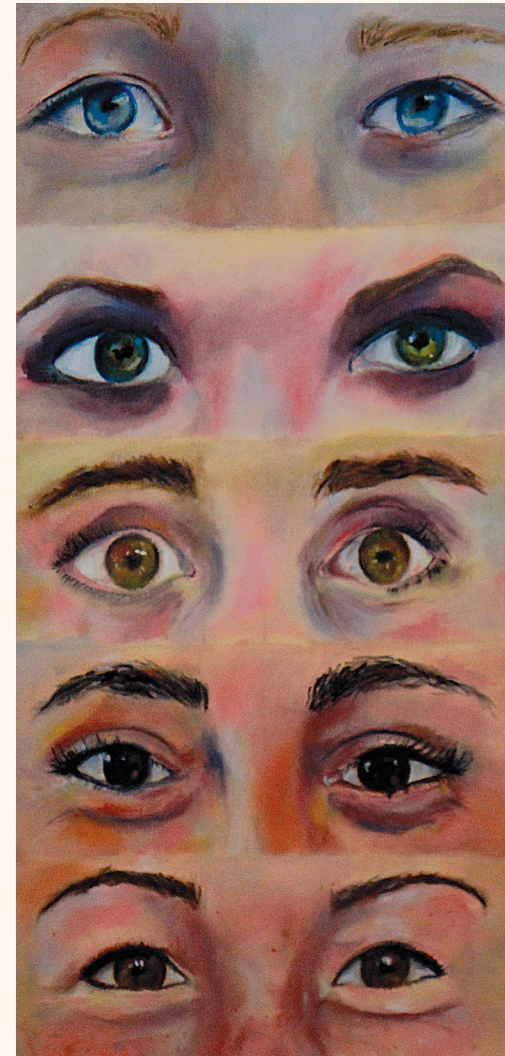


oil on wood by Alex Thornton

## *Becoming Me*

**Kayleigh Land**

Enjoy every inhale  
Enjoy every exhale  
Breathe and breathe deeply  
Take in the scents of the earth.  
Pick around in the dirt  
And don't wash your hands.  
Play with the worms  
Because their wiggling  
Looks funny to you.  
Laugh and laugh often.  
Let the icy contractions of your abdomen  
Be like a drink of cool water on a hot day...  
Wonderful.  
Sit in the sun on a warm spring afternoon.  
Look at the clouds and know that this  
Bliss will last as long as you like.  
Look into the eyes of those you love  
And tread water there.  
Jump into the creek without a swimsuit.  
Let your makeup run down your face,  
And take pride in the newfound  
Beauty of your smile.  
Go two days without showering  
Just because you've been showered  
With contentment.  
Find joy in the small things,  
Find joy in the words you speak,  
In the life you live,  
In the friends you meet,  
But most of all...  
Find joy in yourself.



oil on canvas by Jessica Goldenring





oil on canvas by alexis hawkins



## *Emotions That You Almost Drowned In*

**Nicole Jackson**

All the emotions you pushed to the bottom  
exploded like volcanoes on the ocean floor.

Hot with anger  
then cold with indifference.  
and no one even knew how you felt.



oil on wood by Caroline Harwood

## *Wither*

**Grace Hawkins**

Like a young flower I once stood.  
Tall and proud; surrounded by flowers like me.  
But how I feel smaller, weaker, uglier.

A pit opens in my stomach and I feel  
Myself being sucked in  
I know all I would have to do  
Is outstretch my hand

But I don't want that.  
Help is not on my radar,

Nothing is.  
Just me, a lone, flashing dot  
On that screen flickering away.

So now I shrink and wither away  
Refusing the nutrients in the soil  
In which I was planted.

But no one notices.  
It's all within me:  
This withering.

linoleum block print by Carolyn Edwards



## *Dream State*

**Emily Warren**

A soft breeze tickles my cheek  
The air here is warm and quiet  
Only the soft rustle of grass disturbs this holy silence

The flowers seem to be made from gossamer  
Each petal delicately woven with rainbow threads  
And the dew shines like pearls on each blade of grass

The sky is the color of liquid sapphire  
Clouds dot its glassy surface like pieces of silk  
Each one a different shape, a different color

In the sky appears a fish  
Swimming idly by  
Its fins leafed gold and body a ruby gem

I rub my eyes and look again  
Who knew that fish could fly?  
I reach out to touch its shimmering form

Only to take back my hand  
Wet now, the fish gone from my reach  
Faster than my mind could think

I close my eyes and sink into the sky  
Slowly darker and colder  
But then again

I was the only one  
The only one who could say  
that I had learned to fly



## *Names*

**Charlotte Hughes**

My name is handed down, not like an old sweater or pair of jeans no one wants any-more, but like a little silver box passed from mother to daughter. Both of my names are handed down, my first and middle. I got them from my great grandmothers, who used them years and years ago. Charlotte and Elizabeth. One a flapper who thrived during the Roaring Twenties and died long before I was born; another a dignified lady with soft silver hair who passed on just a few years back. Now I have their names. Long strong names like ropes of pearls. Curling cursive letters inked into old books, initials stamped onto leather bags and carved into silver trays. These names that are old are new when they are on my friends' lips. They hold a different meaning than they did ninety years ago. I carry on these names, but I change them. And maybe one day my daughter's daughter will pick up the names, dust them off, and carry them with her.

mixed media—graphite on paper, gold and silver leafing,  
gold metal powder, and cotton balls—by Kili Walsh





section 4

## Social Remark

### *Why Am I Asleep Again?*

Ellie Hitt

A cloud of dust greets us before the children. Wiping my eyes, I look forward and see the hordes of students making their way towards me. Excitement is tangible, inhibitions negligible. My body, hair and hands are attacked by the caresses of the children. “Mzungu mzungu,” they shout.

“She believed her father was away on safari,” Lotha translates. Marin sobs. He was not on safari, and neither was her mother two years later. We hear the message twice: once with Marin’s tears and again in our native language, I feel the sting both times.

It hurts to hear.

I watched the shaking video screen as the camera swooped to the dusty ground, a battlefield littered with the weapons of mutilation. I saw the tarnished tools, soiled by rust and blood, cut into the soft flesh of the girls as tears rolled down their unblemished brown faces like cataracts, and I was awakened. I lie to myself a lot; I pretend that all the words that tumble over my full lips haven’t been planned. I know what I want to say, or at least I think I do. Am I scared to say the words? Am I frightened that even if I do, that it won’t make a difference? I want to say, “This is wrong.” And ask, “Why have you never told me?” Is it because I am afraid to say the perverse words to my father that I haven’t told him what I saw? Even if I found some courage to explain the statistics and convinced him to donate a little money, would it make a difference?

It hurts to think.

My brain twists and turns when I picture the atrocities. I look upon the faces of the orphans as hungry flies prey upon their angelic faces. I remember the screams and the contorted faces of the girls from the video as the knife penetrates their flesh. They

mixed media (opposite page) by Anna Leigh Turner



are helpless, defenseless, and utterly hopeless. Their own mothers pin their spidery arms onto the earthen floor as men that they love and trust dismember them, leaving them bleeding and vulnerable on the hot African ground.

Of course I know the world is not a wholly terrible place. Even in the pain, there is beauty. A napkin is placed in front of us. We are given no instruction, only the white cloth and a pencil. I can see the watercolors in the distance, and I begin. Soon, my pink elephants are swaying on the line alongside the blue lions.

I am embarrassed carrying my Camelbak standing at the watering hole of sorts. A faucet spits murky water into a shallow pond as a woman eagerly scoops it into her bucket. Brown water splashes on the sides of the worn vessel and trickles down the woman's naked head as she begins her long trek home.

Don't wear shorts, Mama Simba instructs us. If you wear shorts, our children will follow you and then we will lose our culture. But I want to wear shorts. She laughs as she sees the horrified looks on our faces when we realize we will have to face the African sun in long skirts. Her stained and jagged teeth are beautiful. I relax in her presence, for I realize that modesty is not a hardship to endure. True beauty shines through even with more fabric. Later in Arusha, I see a tourist, camera slung around her neck, bare knees. I look away in disgust.

Milkshakes, french fries, burritos, burgers. Five minutes after seeing a four-foot monitor lizard, standing at the base of Mt. Kilimanjaro, moments after watching a lion take down a lame zebra, no matter the location, every conversation leaps back to the food waiting for us back home.

Piles of collard greens, mountains of rice, and pounds of beans, yet it is not enough for us.

Giggling, the wrinkles on the faces of the women dance. Nervously, one woman replies, "Angela, 74, 16." Name, age, grandchildren. Then it begins, slowly at first with the heart-beat of a drum made of taut, dried animal skin. The rhythm is augmented by cow-bells then the metrical steps and shrieks of the women. Cameras are put away as genuine smiles are put on. Twirling, shouting, singing, minutes fade to hours. Our time is up, the zebra tail is put aside, and we wander back to our home.

At the Faraja Orphanage, there are children everywhere. I'm hot, my face is flushed, and there is nothing that I would rather do less. How could I possibly say good-bye? Shaking and crying, I begin, but it is too much looking out at Naima and Emmanuel. All I can say is, "I believe in you. I love you, and I know that God does, too." I want to thank them for wiping the dust off my skirt every time I stood up, for telling me that they love me, but I can't, so I return to my plastic chair. Seconds later, Marin's arms are

around me. She pats my hand, telling me everything will be alright. I free my arm, wrap it around her, and she slides into my embrace. We cry together. I feel all of the orphans' sadness and their belief that no one in the world knows them or will ever care about them. The burdens of regret, hardship, and loneliness are universal; I understand Marin and Naima and Kathbek and all of the others who were looking at me with glassy eyes. That deep understanding, more than anything else, is the most beautiful part of the human experience.

Ω

I saw the crowded bunks occupied by more than five. I felt the worn garments that hung loosely around their athletic bodies. I was awakened to the hardship and suffering, but why I haven't I sent clothes or money? Why haven't I told my story? And why, why am I asleep again?



hand-colored photograph by Lizzy LeBleu



Supreme Court of the United States

No. 436, October Term, 19

Amber Soul

Nicole Jackson

She drinks coffee darker than her skin  
and it's as bitter as the words they throw at her.  
But she takes it.  
Every morning and most nights  
She drinks it in.  
And it never keeps her awake at night  
the way caffeine sometimes does.



oil on canvas by Emily Martin

BROWN, et al.

vs.

Dear Hair

Lauryn McSpadden

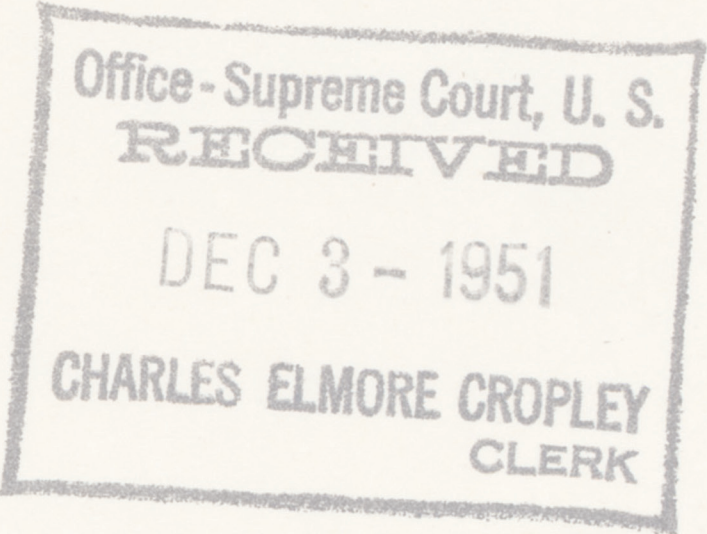
If I were to have a conversation with my hair, I would demand an explanation. My hair would ask, why? And I would rant about how she is always misunderstood. They always say you're so manageable and soft and perfect. They always lift their hands to touch you, like you're some kind of foreign concept. And I'm an alien for having you. Why must you make me suffer three hours to get you the least bit straight? And why does it require pain and tears? I would ask, why aren't you accepted like the others are?

She would explain. I am different, too much to handle, too much to grasp. I am a lion's mane: wild and spontaneous. I am ridiculously curly. So thick that you could play hide and seek in the labyrinth of my locks. Five minutes in the rain and, BOOM! I am a massive afro of tangles and knots. I am unreliable and I am sorry. Then, she would ask me the inevitable question. Why don't you let me live my life? Why must I be tamed and normalized? Can't you just let me be me? I would respond, I have a life too, Hair. I don't want to be defined by ... you. I am not my hair.

Thurgood Marshall

(Address) 204. 40th St

New York (18) N.Y.







## *For My Daughter*

**Keely Hendricks**

My back looks like sandpaper has kissed it,  
And my skin looks like age has held it,  
But the affection ends there.

*Escápate, hija mía*—my mother used to say.

But I stayed.

There's a certain fear I have of hands  
And the leather belts Eduardo makes in his shop—

A fear of his voice, and his boots that scrape against the wooden floor.

My mother once gave me a book for la Navidad,  
But my father, you see, had a fear of them;  
So he took them away.

*Escápate, hija mía*—my mother used to say.

But I stayed.

I used to watch her in the kitchen,  
Making tortillas and singing little songs;  
Her hands were gentle and her humming sounded like the faucet dripping,  
And she smelled like warm, frothy saddle soap.  
She taught me Hello, my favorite color is blue,  
And she gave me a book, once;  
And when her back looked like it had been “kissed” too,  
She wore a shirt that drooped low, just low enough.

I bet she was never scared of hands.

She never left, and neither did I.

But patting the round bottom of my belly,  
Where I can feel the heat and promise of life swelling,  
I promise myself that you won't be the one who stayed.

photograph (film) by Grace Kennedy



## *Six Strings*

**Anne Fioravanti**

Today, I saw a man  
Sitting on the sidewalk.  
Around him were his only possessions:  
A tin cup,  
The clothes on his back,  
And six strings.

His worn and tattered fingers  
Danced across the frets  
Like figure skaters on a sheet  
Of perfect ice.  
And he sang his tune  
With a look of careless bliss on his face.

When my coins clanked into the tin  
In time to the beat, as if they knew the song,  
He gave a tip of his hat in return  
And smiled, pure and bright.

And I knew he was counting his six blessings—  
While all of the privileged ones  
Were counting our curses.

photograph (film — opposite page) by Kristina Rechter





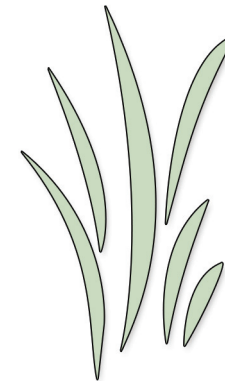
## *Cocoa Leaves*

**Keely Hendricks**

Potosi has a face that's pocked with mines—  
Some scars that shame the Incan's ancient braveness.  
Manuel will see the dawn of twelve short years  
From underneath the rocks and pitted darkness.  
His belt is wrapped around a starving waist,  
A headlight strapped across his youthful head.  
A boy, condemned to mine until he dies,  
His chalk-white face won't change once he is dead.  
A certain older man is praying softly  
That such young blood will not be curdled quickly,  
That fight and pride will force him from the grave  
To live and not be ruled by damning duty.  
He thinks of when his hair was black and thick,  
When life had not been lived only to die.  
So sucking on a cocoa leaf still green,  
The aging miner stares at this so-treasured prize.  
Oh what a price to pay for life's demise  
For Kings! He smiles and chews his leaf, then cries.



linoleum block print by Anna Patterson



## *The Youth*

**Reagan Alley**

Shall I peel them off for you?  
Memories congealed on the back of my eyelids,  
file-box feelings shrouded in shadow,  
tucked away in dusty corners.  
Ghosts of sticky bike handles and scabby knees,  
milky hose water and plastic swords,  
tar-hot trampoline, black toes soaking in the tub.  
These were the days before “perfect” —  
days we fling to the gallows:  
When “happy” was more than just living and breathing  
When “friends” weren't a step on the stairs to success  
When “love” was big arms and soft butterfly kisses  
When you wished upon stars  
and eyelashes  
and weeping wax candles—  
When galaxies were mysteries,  
no man could climb the tallest tree,  
and each emerald dream carved on the heart of every human being:  
And each sweaty, wadded hope clenched in the fist of every man, woman, or child  
was equal.



## English, Scots, Irish



oil on canvas by Claire Frankenfeld

## Wayne Rooney — Footballer

**Brianne Morrow**

*I 'eard o 'em. How could ye not?  
He be a bit squiffy from all 'em pounds.  
The whole blimey lot o' it ha gone to his dishy 'ead.*



If this is a bloody match gimme a front row seat:  
It's my life and I'll do as I please.  
I've been red hot since the day I was born,  
Grew up given "just enough education to perform."  
Every goal, every win is a poker,  
Stoking the fire.  
I can afford my temper, but I've never enough.  
Now I simply close my eyes to the price tags and red flags.  
I'll tell you: when you're rat arsed  
It's much easier to be a snake in the grass.  
When you're picking up totties and pissing around,  
Recollections of your lass with the lad get  
lost in the liquor.  
I'm the number one player  
On this splashed out team.  
In fact it's quite hard to not score when you're  
Aroused by fame.  
So when I retire this crimson jersey they'll think of me and say:  
"Wazza." Quite a winner, wasn't he?



*Captain Richard Burton — Explorer*



**Clare Gilmore**

A fool, they called me. An absurd fool. — I called them jealous.  
The life I lived was certainly one which could evoke such an emotion.  
And it did, but the consequence was the loss of devotion of one of my dearest friends.  
I used to argue with myself, what's more important: adventure or success?  
In those moments where I'd address the Royal Geographical Society  
I was certain it was the latter.  
But that came after the months of famine, fights, and illness,  
Peril, discovery, jubilation,  
And every other possible sensation that came along with adventure.

“God save the queen” chanted England, while I chanted and danced around a fire.  
Their life went on mundanely while Speke and I  
Tamed the insane and watched kings give guns to babies.  
It was the best and the worst time of my life, those days of heat and nights of fright.  
Blessed by a spray of milk in the face from an African's mouth,  
We journeyed until our friendship had reached its final destination.  
But a savage England made African ignorance look like bliss  
And turned me into the provocative lion Speke was keen on hunting.  
Still I refused to roar or hiss.

The Nile—the Nile: an African river but an English obsession,  
Even its source a namesake of the Queen,  
God save the Queen, Victoria.  
My wounds are healed, and yet I feel the sting of betrayal, the pain of treachery.  
For Speke, success was most important, and he achieved it alone.  
I have my Isabel, the memory of my adventures and my soul,  
In which he'll always have a place, God rest his.

*Philip Larkin — Poet*



**Lilly Wimberly**

*Here Endeth.*  
Library: the quiet abode of the English codger.  
Why shut the public out, when you can shut yourself in?  
The hush of an official office turned personal study—  
I ensconce my thoughts in the dusty hallways,  
Surrounded by volume after volume of  
Human folly and failures, preserved eternal in ink and paper.  
I call it realistic: *man hands on misery to man.*  
But what's a life without some discontent?  
How to upkeep a spotless reputation: *Someone would know. I don't.*  
Some say it all stems from an unhappy childhood, neglect,  
Or without the love of smothering mother and fascist father  
No. You read too far into the pasts of those who write –  
Boredom. That was my only childhood plague.  
The cure lay in universities, and more specifically, their libraries --  
My one constant love affair that led my here – Hull.  
I am England:  
“Post war” poet suffering from loss of inspiration,  
An honorary laureate whose career is coming to a close.  
(Good thing, too – I never liked the spotlight)  
Country being quietly ushered out,  
An unwanted guest who's overstayed his welcome.  
I find my thoughts only preoccupied with the precise method and moment  
Of my coming demise.

*I just think it will happen, soon.*



*Robert Burns — Balladeer*



**Ellie Beahm**

I named the horse Nelly, after the first:  
O, once I lov'd a bonnie lass.  
She was the first, certainly not the last.  
But what would she say now, if she saw me  
Here, riding on the steed of her namesake  
To Edinburgh?

And what would father say, if he could speak from the grave?  
Would he commend me for doing something, for being somebody,  
Or would he scold me for being better than he ever was?  
I will top his seven with twelve, and  
Out of my skull will spring words,  
Flowing over with the thickness of molasses.

And maybe even after I'm gone,  
They will all remember my words and my songs,  
And the clear vowels of their six hundred voices will hold me up,  
A floating ghost to reign over his dominion for centuries.

What of Catullus, Ovid?  
Did they believe that their words would last?  
They would shout AD VICTORIAM as they rode into Edinburgh,  
Preparing to yield their pens for the sake of their songs,  
And if they topple – nothing a pint of wine can't fix.  
There's nothing a pint of wine can't fix.  
The healing burn in the back of the throat  
Leaves you feeling a little more whole.

But what would they say –  
Nelly, Anna, Jean, Mary, May –  
What would they all say if they were here,  
Riding on a horse with me to Edinburgh,  
Holding all of my pens?

AD VICTORIAM.

*Shane MacGowan — Frontman*



**Reagan Alley**

Shane MacGowan, born Christmas Day, 1957  
Christmas Day you say? How very lucky?  
I wouldn't throw that phrase around.  
I've seen luck – a femme fatale –  
And trust me, she won't hang about  
When miles of sand have turned to grout  
And every wave has washed you out  
But I'm still waiting for my final day of days to come

Luck dropped me off in Kent you see,  
while visiting some family  
Wedged between the paper mills along the River Kent  
I hardly knew myself before the currents swept us off again  
Sailing quietly along to Ireland

*Oh, my life has been a smorgasbord  
of throes and falling overboard,*



*slippery steps on icy puddles  
and recollections growing muddled –  
drowning in my mind.*

I've never been one to compete.  
I like the cool, detest the heat  
And braggers often end up getting burned; you see I've noticed this  
standing in the dusty corners, waiting.  
Westminster School: Dat Deus Incrementum  
It held my sails and I was grounded  
on the track for melancholy normal-ness.  
Alas!  
Never one for gravity,  
the wind of change has given me endless chances to rewrite my story,  
so I dove in.  
It's not so bad, they always say, I'd stop now if it struck my fancy  
But lovers always lie.  
I joined the dance of hazy dreams and lived in heightened fantasy  
I never touched the ground again (one of water's miracles)  
And even when my schooldays ended,  
Carpet pulled abruptly from beneath my floating feet  
Enough! he cried, I've had enough – don't come back again!  
Well Mr. Principality, I'll make my own "begin," I said.  
I never saw the end...

*Oh, my life has been a smorgasbord  
of throes and falling overboard,  
slippery steps on icy puddles  
and recollections growing muddled –  
drowning in my mind.*

All my life I struggled with the scratchy notes on paper  
Marred by expectations of a person that I wasn't,  
nor ever could I be.  
But when I found the music stuffed between the thin white pages  
I found a freedom money couldn't buy  
And for a while, life's happiness,  
a lovely drug all by itself,

buoyed me to distant shores of joy  
until the high wore off.  
And agents yelling out my deadlines killed my first true love,  
the only thing that never fogged my mind.

I never thought of money, you see,  
one never does when one is free.  
At least until the bill comes.  
The Pogues in 1982, The Popes a decade later  
Shane MacGowan and the Gang in early twenty-ten  
And all the while the jingling in my piggy bank was shrinking,  
as spicy drinks and happy pills became a daily dosage.

And now?

I drink to sink, I swim to float  
Pouring my pounds in to lighten the load  
Pounds to forgive and pounds to escape  
Pounds to regret when I can't pay my way  
Into fantastical worlds I created when I was too young to see past the next wave.



oil on canvas by Delara Alviri



## Gatsbyland



## Beautifully Broken

Jenna Moses

When we are but a soft whisper in the ashes, we will cling  
To the thorny vine that entangles our souls in stunning desolation  
And emerging from the darkness, become a single bloom in recreation

Ω

oil on wood by Jamie DuBois

## My Last Heir (After Browning)

Martha Schull

There's my latest work, floating there in the pool, looking as if he were alive.  
Day after day I have seen him through my ash-covered lenses.  
Won't you please sit and look at him, my flower?  
None can draw back his curtain for you but I.

Never had I made a man with such promise. Such promise indeed.  
Up from the ashes I built him; in smoky corners of dark rooms I made him, settled his fate  
Through hidden handshakes and abandoned promises.

But he had a sense of hope—how shall I say?—too soon excited.  
My dear Madam, it was not his doctor's presence only,  
That called that spark of green light in his eyes.

He drove his yellow car dressed in a white flannel suit, but his eyes were never on my roads.  
No, they were always fixed to the bay.  
Guests were drawn to his mansion like moths to a light.  
Eating his midnight meals, dancing to the music of his melancholy trombones.  
Closing deals on the courage of Gatsby's liquor. Yes, I saw it all.

He thanked me for my gift, of course. But for your attention, Daisy,  
He extended the same thanks. As though my million dollar investment  
Was as trifling as a kiss.  
This grew. I gave commands. Then the kisses could be stopped altogether.  
And there he floats, as if alive.

Of course it wasn't him for which I had unaffected scorn.  
No—Gatsby turned out all right in the end.  
It is what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated  
In the wake of his dreams that discouraged me.

Won't you please rise, Daisy? We'll meet the company below.  
There's a convertible in the valley I wish to show your husband.  
I'm afraid the previous owner had no appropriate use for it.



## *A Final Will and Testament*

**Allie Polk**

I'm not the man you imagined me to be.

Behind the ever-moving circus  
of stiffly pressed suits,  
gowns in shimmering silk,  
and clinking champagne flutes  
I stand—a carnival clown pretending to be ringmaster.

But the audience begins to whisper  
and question the man hidden by the hat.  
They point accusingly at my clumsy feet and bulbous nose;  
They notice my drawn, white face  
and frail, fixed smile.

My sleeve hangs like a ball and chain  
weighed down by rainbow shirts  
that bewilder and bemuse with their colorful cascade.  
Silver medals dig into my palms,  
their polished points waiting to appear  
behind an unsuspecting ear.

When the caravans roll past night's velvet curtain,  
I stand alone in the middle of the ring  
with nothing and no one.

I'm surrounded by the ruins of my "Greatest Show on Earth."  
Orange peels stiffen like cold corpses in my dustbin.  
Grey cracks creep across my marble pool.  
Dust drops its dusky mantle on my floor.

Forgive me, father, for the rest of this blank page is all that remains of  
the famed  
and failed  
Jay Gatsby.

## *Miss Venus Fly Trap*

**Adelaide Morphett**

*He tickles honeydew drops down your spine ...*

You, Miss Venus Fly Trap,  
posing as familiar forsythia,  
a demure daisy, in good company.



monotype print by Sara Swords

## *To My Impossible Darling*

**Anna LeBleu**

I want absolutely nothing less than to create that five-word, shimmering outburst:

*Tom, I never loved you.*  
Then to tip up my fresh, rosy lips  
And send up peals of deliciously mocking laughter at him  
And at all of them.

They would only stare with their steel-rimmed eyes  
And we could turn and whisk away in a whirl of white taffeta  
And winking bow ties  
And tumbling lavender confetti  
And settle our backs into the hot soft leather of your sleek Victoria  
And just drive.





Without the mangled, soulful emptiness  
Of a stale life and a strained love,

The stars could reflect in the clear champagne sparkle of our eyes  
And the August wind could whisper though my perfect powdered curls.  
I can feel it now; your forearm in your Spanish-blue suit coat,  
Fitted securely around the small of my back.

But I turn, and my eyes meet Tom's,  
And all the glittering promise of those velvet evenings  
Among movie stars and silvery murmurs  
Convulses and contracts  
And becomes like little beads of mercury on a laboratory table.  
And I can't shake the lulling hesitation.

I know you can see it behind these trembling eyelashes.  
I want only to know again the glorious disillusionment  
Of being carried away in the embrace of a life-long candlelit evening.  
But that dramatic, blooming romance the way that we remember it to be  
May or may not have taken place  
In our waking hours.

And I know  
That to drift on, forever seeking,  
With a wanderlust that would scatter me like the dust on a dance floor,  
Would be to resign myself to the life of a disenchanted desert wanderer  
Staring with thirsty eyes into an impossible golden mirage.



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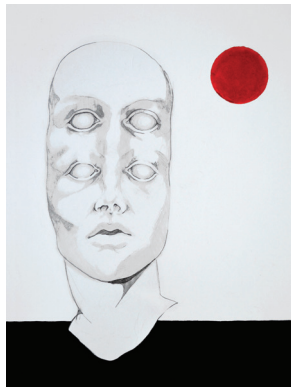
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# *Night*

**Taylor Hardin**

The turning of a page,  
The slamming of a door,  
A last breath,  
We're left in the dark.  
The light is gone—  
We have no direction.  
The only chance to begin again—  
A clean slate  
The dark sky is a drawing board.  
Day is done  
Gone the sun.



ink and graphite on paper  
by Sarah Hong